UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CN.17/1996/L.8
30 April 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Fourth session
18 April-3 May 1996
Agenda item 5 (b)

REVIEW OF CROSS-SECTORAL CLUSTERS: DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO AGENDA 21, CHAPTERS 8 AND 38-40

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman

International institutional arrangements
(Chapter 38 of Agenda 21)

1. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the report of the Secretary-General on institutional arrangements to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (E/CN.17/1996/16) as well as the more detailed background paper on the subject. The Commission noted that the institutional arrangements put in place in follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at various levels have served the international community well over the last four years;

(b) Noted the new and innovative elements introduced into the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and considered that these functional considerations, including the working methods and multi-year programme of work of the Commission, will be an important element of the 1997 review process;

(c) Welcomed General Assembly resolution 50/113, in particular paragraph 13, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, for the consideration of the Commission at its fifth session, a comprehensive report containing an overall assessment of the progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels, and in the implementation of related outcomes, as well as recommendations for future actions and priorities;

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(d) Also welcomed the system-wide cooperation and coordination efforts undertaken by the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, through its system of task managers, in implementing Agenda 21;

(e) Reaffirmed the importance placed by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1995 on the coordinated follow-up of international conferences and the need to coordinate the multi-year programmes of all relevant functional commissions and the division of labour among them;

(f) Welcomed the proposed review by the Economic and Social Council of the regional commissions, with a view, inter alia, to strengthening, as appropriate, their participation relating to the implementation of the results of major United Nations international conferences;

(g) Recognized the major steps made by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in accordance with its mandate and in implementation of Agenda 21, to provide effective support to the work of the Commission, inter alia, through the provision of scientific, technical and legal information and policy advice on the environment. In this context, the Commission welcomed decisions adopted by the Governing Council of UNEP at its eighteenth session, in which the Governing Council of UNEP specified ways in which UNEP could support the Commission and encouraged closer cooperation and collaboration between UNEP and other organizations;

(h) Welcomed initiatives taken by bilateral, regional, intergovernmental and United Nations system organizations, as well as financial institutions, that integrate sustainable development as a central focus into their policies and programmes to facilitate Agenda 21 implementation.

2. The Commission therefore:

(a) Encourages national Governments to ensure that their countries' institutional arrangements further promote the implementation of Agenda 21, while ensuring the broad participation of all stakeholders;

(b) Emphasizes the need for the Commission to continue providing guidance on key sustainable development issues and playing a leading role in providing the forum for reviewing national, regional and international efforts, including, as appropriate, the role of major groups, in the pursuit of sustainable development;

(c) Stresses the need for all relevant bodies of the United Nations system to make further efforts to make sustainable development a central focus of their programmes and policies;

(d) Recommends that ever-closer links be established, particularly through the bureaux of the organizations concerned, between the work of the Commission and other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council so as to ensure that the Commission can contribute to and/or draw on the relevant output of other bodies in a timely manner and to avoid duplication of work. The multi-year programmes of work of the commissions, to be coordinated by the

Council, should be seen as an important instrument for facilitating the linkage among those commissions;

(e) Encourages the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development to continue to enhance inter-agency coordination, inter alia, by promoting a more focused approach to coordination and close collaboration aimed at elaborating action-oriented recommendations on main policy and cooperation issues. The Commission has requested the Committee to continue its work aimed at ensuring complementarity of efforts and avoidance of duplication and overlap in United Nations system activities to implement Agenda 21 and to keep the Commission informed of its activities through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC);

(f) Recommends that the 1997 review give special attention also to post-United Nations Conference on Environment and Development institutional arrangements in order to ensure their continued relevance and increased effectiveness in the years to come. In this regard, possible results of the ongoing negotiations on the further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, on an agenda for development and on other related reform processes, such as the High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, will be taken into account to promote better coordination among various United Nations bodies;

(g) Recommends that the preparatory work for the special session of the General Assembly should examine the institutional implications for forging new alliances for sustainable development between the United Nations and other major organizations relevant for sustainable development, in particular the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Bretton Woods institutions, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization, as well as between Governments and civil society.